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DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/RSP/TC, EAP/PA, EAP/PD -
ROBERT PALLADINO
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA'S NATIONAL DEFENSE WHITE PAPER

A) "Prevent Independence by All Means, No Hope For Negotiations [Between China and Taiwan]"

Journalist Wang Li-juan wrote in the conservative, pro-unification "United Daily News" (12/28):

"China Monday released its national defense white paper, in which the 'negatively developing Taiwan independence power' is listed as an important factor to influence [China's] national security. China proposed three strongly-worded 'resolute' oppositions and one 'never,' which are more harsh and more baldly stated than the 'three conditions to use force against Taiwan' stated in its 2000 national defense white paper.

"'Permanent refusal to negotiate' is not mentioned in the 'conditions' to use force against Taiwan in this year's white paper. However, the white paper proposed that the two sides across the Strait could only resume talks after the Taiwan authority accepts the 'One China' principle and terminates separatist activities of Taiwan independence. It is obvious that China by all means constrains Taiwan independence in its policy toward Taiwan, and China has no hope for future talks in the Taiwan Strait.."

B) "The National Defense White Paper Is Another Card For China to Push For Anti-Secession"

The centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" editorialized (12/28):

".China's 2004 national defense white paper indicated that the persistent U.S. arms sale to Taiwan is sending a wrong signal [from the United States] to Taiwan. It [the white paper] clearly pointed at the special U.S. arms procurement by Taiwan at the cost of more than 600 billion NTD. However, China did not mention the United States when saying [China] resolutely opposes 'any country' forming any military alliance with Taiwan. The white paper also said China would keep a low profile and a cooperative attitude on its nuclear strategy. These declarations are weaker than before and the meaning is that China seeks help from the United States, and China does not adopt a confrontational attitude with the United States.

"Looking back on history, it is less than four years since China 2000 released its national defense white paper commenting on the Taiwan issue, hence, there is quite a change in China's policy toward Taiwan. The fundamental nature of China's military threats toward Taiwan has not changed, but the contents of the comments and the adjustment in focus are closely correlated with political changes within Taiwan. To be frank, the current deadlock in cross-Strait relations is not caused by any single factor from either side of the Taiwan Strait. Tests in the future might be more grim, and the authorities on both sides of the Strait should face them with wisdom."

PAAL